

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 and 23-32 are pending in this application after this Amendment. Claims 1, 9-11, 16, 18-19, and 27-29 are independent. Claims 30-32 have been added.

Examiner Interview

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the interview conducted on January 7, 2004. It is respectfully submitted that the amendments made herein are consistent with the discussions had during the interview.

Entry of the above amendments is earnestly solicited. An early and favorable first action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Conclusion

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Catherine M. Voisinet (Reg. No. 52,327) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By _____
Terrell C. Birch, #19,382

TCB/CMV/jdm
0033-0639P

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000